



Assessing adaptation to the health risks of climate change: What guidance can existing frameworks provide?

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Abstract:

Climate change adaptation assessments aim at assisting policy-makers in reducing the health risks associated with climate change and variability. This paper identifies key characteristics of the climate-health relationship and of the adaptation decision problem that require consideration in climate change adaptation assessments. It then analyzes whether these characteristics are appropriately considered in existing guidelines for climate impact and adaptation assessment and in pertinent conceptual models from environmental epidemiology. The review finds three assessment guidelines based on a generalized risk management framework to be most useful for guiding adaptation assessments of human health. Since none of them adequately addresses all key challenges of the adaptation decision problem, actual adaptation assessments need to combine elements from different guidelines. Established conceptual models from environmental epidemiology are found to be of limited relevance for assessing and planning adaptation to climate change since the prevailing toxicological model of environmental health is not applicable to many climate-sensitive health risks.

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Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Ecosystem Changes, Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Security, Temperature

Extreme Weather Event: Flooding

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Food/Water Security: Food Access/Distribution, Nutritional Quality

Temperature: Extreme Heat

Geographic Feature: ☐

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☐

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation): ☐

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact: ☐

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Infectious Disease, Morbidity/Mortality

Infectious Disease: Foodborne/Waterborne Disease, Vectorborne Disease

Foodborne/Waterborne Disease: General Foodborne/Waterborne Disease

Vectorborne Disease: General Vectorborne

Medical Community Engagement: ☐

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☐

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Model/Methodology: ☐

type of model used or methodology development is a focus of resource

Methodology

Resource Type: ☐

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion, Review

Timescale: ☐

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time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content